

if there is any other drug more far-reaching in its influence for good upon the skin in a general way I have yet to learn it, and Dr. Fox has not suggested what it is.

My observation and experience in relation to the use of arsenic allow me to generalize only upon a few points.

Arsenic is distinctly a cutaneous stimulant; therefore, in the initial stage of a malady possessing an inflammatory element (notably eczema), it is not only not useful, but may be actually pernicious. Used after the acute stage has been controlled by appropriate means, it often speeds the parting guest and prevents it from lingering in a state of prolonged and desperate chronicity. A fitting analogy is the use of friction and passage in joint disease. This remedy is very efficient, but it has its time and place. When the joint is acutely inflamed, massage only adds fuel to the flame; but when the fire has been subdued, then the stiffness and loss of motion, perhaps otherwise inevitable, may be often overcome by the skilled application of massage. If the joint would get well without the massage, there is no call for its use, and no one but a routinist would employ it, yet that it has its use can hardly be denied, and so with arsenic.

Arsenic, in my opinion, is not useful unless the stomach tolerates it well and appropriates it in a kindly way. When digestion is interfered with by the use of arsenic, nausea or inappetence produced, it generally does no good often harm. In such instances, preparing the stomach beforehand, changing the diet, disgoring the liver, giving attention to the patient's personal habits will allow the remedy to exert an influence, where unaided it would be without value or even harmful. The same remarks apply exactly to the administration of cod-liver oil, and often to the use of iron and other tonics.

The different preparations of arsenic may be called into play here in selected cases. I have more than once taken a patient with chronic psoriasis, who had hopelessly given up the digestion, and seemed to irritate his skin, and conducted him to a cure by combining arsenious acid with nuxvomica and pepsin, with some changes in diet, or by substituting the arsenite of soda for the arsenite of potash. The Bourboule water, a mild solution of the arsenite of soda, is a very gentle way of administering arsenic; too gentle as a rule, but yet I believe often effective of good, particularly in the case of weak digestion. Fowler's solution, especially if it has been long prepared, is very likely to disagree with digestion, and for this reason I seldom use it.

The more diffused, generalized and chronic that a given cutaneous malady is, the greater do I consider the indication for the use of a suitable preparation of arsenic, if the stomach will take it kindly. The more localized an affection is, be it ever so chronic, the less indication is there for arsenic in a general way, in my opinion.

Generalized chroma eczema, generalized psoria-

sis, and pemphigus may, perhaps, be selected as the maladies in which arsenic may be expected to exert what may be termed a certain specific general effect in controlling the symptoms—exceptions to the contrary notwithstanding. Yet the combination of mild doses of arsenic with other remedies is not without value in some localized maladies, and in combating some forms of acne and some cutaneous manifestations of syphilis. Much also might be said, but more cautiously, in the case of neurotic maladies as affecting the skin, and where an element of nervous debility keeps down the patient's general vitality, and prevents other suitable remedies from being effective.

In short, I think that there is so much value in the intelligent use of arsenic that it seems a sin to allow its association with that time-honored humbug, permiscuous blood letting, as an appropriate analogy to pass unchallenged.—*Journal of Cutaneous and Venereal Diseases.*

ON THE VALUE OF BORIC ACID IN VARIOUS CONDITIONS OF THE MOUTH.

BY A. D. MACGREGOR, M.B., KIRKALDY.

Boric acid is now officinal, and justly so. It has long been used in various metallurgical and ceramic operations, and more recently its preservative power has been abundantly demonstrated. It is this antiseptic power which gives it its great therapeutic value. It is a very stable compound—one of the most stable of the acids; it is not volatile, and only exerts its action when in solution; fortunately, however, it is soluble in more than one menstruum. Up till now its chief application has been in connection with modern surgery, where the boric ointment, lint, and lotions all hold a prominent place. There are spheres of usefulness for it, too, in medicine; and one of these is in diseases of the mouth. It is the benefit of its local action we usually wish to gain, for, though sometimes given internally—as in irritable conditions of the bladder—its topical antiseptic effect is more often desired. In connection with its local application in various diseased conditions of the mouth, its solubility in water and glycerine, its unirritating character, its comparatively innocuous nature, and its almost tastelessness, are greatly in its favor. More particularly is this the case in treating such conditions in children, whose oral cavities cause them so much annoyance. Speaking generally, boric acid will be found useful in all conditions of the mouth, fauces, pharynx and nose, where there is any abrasion of the epithelium; whether it be used as a powder, gargle, mouth-wash, pigment or confection. More definitely, I may say, it is not contra-indicated in any of the forms of *stomatitis*, though scarcely severe enough for the graver varieties.

In *simple catarrhal stomatitis*, a mouth-wash, containing from 10 to 15 grains to the fluid ounce, speedily cures the condition, and exercises the same beneficial influence in the *ulcerative* form,